

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 COME-00
EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 /079 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5839
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
USMISSION USNATO
DIA WASHDC
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 24798

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: ROBERT FABRE STRIKES AGAIN

SUMMARY: ROBERT FABRE -- TRAITOR, OPPORTUNIST, OR MAN
OF DIALOGUE? SUCH ARE THE EPITHETS BEING HUNG ON THE
FORMER LEFT RADICAL (MRG) PRESIDENT NOW THAT HE HAS
BECOME GISCARD'S SPECIAL EMISSARY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND
REGIONAL COORDINATION. ADVOCATE OF A "MODERN AND REA-
SONABLE FRENCH LEFT" CAPABLE OF PROVIDING A "CENTER-
LEFT, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC" ALTERNATIVE, FABRE NOW BECOMES
THE FIRST TEST CASE FOR GISCARD'S POLICY OF AN "OPENING"
TO THE LEFT. WILL HE HAVE ACCESS TO GOF FILES, WILL HIS
RECOMMENDATIONS BE ACTED ON? FABRE HIMSELF HAS ALREADY
POINTED OUT THE RISK FOR GISCARD: "IF MY MISSION ACHIE-
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VES NOTHING, IT WILL PROVE THAT A NEW RELATIONSHIP BET-
WEEN THE GOF AND THE LEFT IS NOT POSSIBLE." END
SUMMARY.

1. A FIRST DEFECTION: LEAVING THE ELYSEE AUGUST 4,
ROBERT FABRE BECAME THE FIRST DEFECTOR TO CROSS THE
IRON CURTAIN OF LEFT-RIGHT OPPOSITION WHICH HAS MARKED

FRENCH POLITICS OF RECENT YEARS. ALWAYS AN ADVOCATE OF MODERATION AND DIALOGUE, FABRE WAS NEVER COMFORTABLE IN THE UNITED LEFT CAMP WHERE COMMUNISTS HAD TO BE TREATED AS BLOOD-BROTHERS. IT WAS FABRE WHO FIRST TOOK THE PLUNGE IN VISITING THE ELYSEE IN SEPTEMBER 1975, WHO REFUSED PCF DEMANDS FOR ADDITIONAL NATIONALIZATIONS IN SEPTEMBER 1977, AND WHO FIRST DECLARED THE COMMON PROGRAM DEAD ON ELECTION EVE MARCH 19. NOW, AS GISCARD'S PERSONAL EMISSARY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND REGIONAL COORDINATION (FINAL ACCEPTANCE STILL DEPENDS ON "SUFFICIENT RESOURCES" BEING PUT AT HIS DISPOSAL), FABRE CHALLENGES LEFT DOGMA OF ABSOLUTE OPPOSITIONAL PURITY WHICH HOLDS THAT COLLABORATION WITH THE RIGHT IS BOTH SUICIDAL AND FRUITLESS.

2. FABRE JUSTIFIES HIS DECISION IN THE NAME OF DIALOGUE AND THE TRADITIONAL RADICAL SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS. "RIGHT ON", SAY MODERATE LEFT RADICALS, UDF LEADERS AND OTHERS COMMITTED TO THE CENTER-LEFT STRATEGY. "TREASON", SAY THE COMMUNISTS WHO CLAIM THAT FABRE'S ACTION PROVES PS AND MRG RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEMISE OF THE COMMON PROGRAM IN SEPTEMBER 1977. "VERY SAD", RESPOND THE SOCIALISTS WHO ARE MORE CONCERNED IN DEFENDING THEMSELVES AGAINST THE PCF THAN IN THE DEFECTION OF FABRE. AND FINALLY, FABRE'S OWN PARTY (MRG) DEMANDS HIS RESIGNATION. A NONE TOO HAPPY SITUATION FOR ROBERT FABRE, CONFIDENTIAL

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ATTACKED VICIOUSLY BY HIS FRIENDS OF YESTERDAY WHILE MORALLY FORCED TO STAND HIS DISTANCE FROM THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE HIS FRIENDS OF TOMORROW.

3. A QUESTION OF IMAGE: THE DECISION TO ACCEPT GISCARD'S OFFER WAS NOT MADE LIGHTLY. PIERRE BRACQUE (FABRE'S RIGHT ARM) TOLD EMBOFF WEEKS AGO THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ELYSEE WERE IN PROGRESS TO DEFINE A SUITABLY IMPORTANT MANDATE FOR FABRE. THE OPERATION IS CLEARLY ONE OF IMAGE RATHER THAN SUBSTANCE, FOR THE MINISTRIES OF LABOR AND INTERIOR ALREADY HAVE CLEAR-CUT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND REGIONAL COORDINATION. ALTHOUGH FABRE WILL CERTAINLY PRODUCE SOME IDEAS IN THESE TWO AREAS (A FEW NO DOUBT DRAWN FROM THE COMMON PROGRAM), THE MAIN FALLOUT IS STRICTLY POLITICAL:

-- BY ENHANCING FABRE'S STATUS, THE PROSPECTS ARE LIKEWISE BETTERED FOR A FABRE-LED, CENTER-LEFT ORIENTED LIST FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS. SUCH A LIST, INCLUDING NON-POLITICAL "PERSONALITIES", AS WELL AS DISSIDENT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MRG AND RADICAL SOCIALIST PARTY, WOULD BE EXPECTED TO ENTICE A SMALL PORTION

OF THE PS ELECTORATE AND BECOME THE BEACHHEAD
FOR FURTHER ELECTORAL ASSAULTS ON LEFT TERRI-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 24798

TORY;

-- GISCARD CONTINUES THE STRING OF SMALL MANEU-
VERS WHICH KEEP THE "OPENING" PROCESS ALIVE.
ALTHOUGH TANGIBLE RESULTS ARE STILL FEW AND
FAR BETWEEN, HE HAS THUS FAR VERY NEATLY NUR-
TURED THE CONCEPT IN THE REALM OF PUBLIC
CONSCIOUSNESS. AT THE SAME TIME, GISCARD HAS
PLANTED ANOTHER CONTENTIOUS ISSUE INSIDE THE
LEFT'S RANKS.

4. FABRE IN FACT BRINGS LITTLE TO GISCARD IN TERMS OF
PURE POLITICAL POWER -- A HANDFUL OF PARTY ACTIVISTS
AND HIS OWN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEAT ARE FABRE'S ONLY
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TANGIBLE ASSETS. BUT IN THE SPIRIT OF GISCARD'S "OPEN-
ING TO THE LEFT", ROBERT FABRE HAS VALUE. SEEN BY MANY
FRENCHMEN AS THE COURAGEOUS LITTLE GUY STANDING UP TO
THE PCF BULLY, FABRE COMMANDS A GOOD DEAL OF RESPECT
NOT ONLY AS A MAN OF PRINCIPLE BUT AS AN HONEST REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MODERATE LEFT. IN THAT CAPACITY, FABRE
MAY SERVE AS A RALLYING POINT FOR SOME IN THE LEFT WHO
ARE CONVINCED THAT AN ALLIANCE WITH THE PCF WILL NEVER
WORK. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HE HELPS TO ADVANCE THE BUDDING
PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS AND NORMALIZATION OF OPPOSITION-MAJORITY RELATIONS. BUT ROBERT FABRE IS STRUGGLING
WITH A HEAVY CONSCIENCE TO PROVE THAT HE IS NEITHER A
TRAITOR NOR AN OPPORTUNIST. THAT MEANS HE HAS TO PRODUCE
RESULTS; IN HIS OWN WORDS, "TO SPEAK EFFECTIVELY FOR
THOSE WHOSE VOICES HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD IN GOVERNMENT."
THUS, UNLIKE MOST GISCARDIAN EFFORTS TO DATE, THERE IS A
RISK, THAT OF SPLASHING SOME COLD WATER ON THE FLICKERING FLAME OF "OPENING."

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